By Dublin Bishop of Derry

AN ANSWER TO A PAPER ENTITULED THE CASE

Of the Protestant DISSENTERS Of *IRELAND*, In Reference to a BILL of Indulgence, Represented and Argued.

THERE being a Paper lately Publish't, Intitul'd, *The Case of the Protestant Dissenters of* Ireland, *in Reference to a Bill of Indulgence, Represented, and Argued.* I shall endeavour to shew, that tho, the Author has truly *Represented* the Desires of the Dissenting Protestants among us, yet he has weakly *Argued* for the granting of them.

The *Desires* of the Dissenting Protestants, he Comprises in these Two Propositions; First, that *by a Bill of Indulgence a full Security for the free Exercise of Religion according to their Consciences may be given them.* Secondly, *That there be no such Clauses annex't to it, as may Disable 'em from Serving their King, and their Country.*

As to the first of these *Desires*, I believe there are few or none but will agree to secure to 'em by Law, the Free Exercise of their Religion, tho 'tis plain, the Authors Arguments do not evince the necessity of it, as may appear by a distinct Consideration of 'em. The first of which is this, That since *our Security* consists in the *Number* and *Union* of *Protestants*, this Bill will promote both, by *drawing Protestant Dissenters from abroad*, and by *Uniting* those at home, and by securing their *Affections* to the *Government*, that grants 'em this *Indulgence*. Now to this, I answer:

First, That this Indulgence will tend rather to the multiplicity of Sects, than to the increase of the Number of Protestants, and will most successfully promote those very Designs, which our Author vainly imagins it the best Expedient to obstruct; For a general Indulgence has always prov'd instrumental to the advancing the Popish Interest among us, and has therefore been vigorously promoted by Popish Emissaries in *England*, and that by expres Orders from their Superiors abroad, who have Experimentally found it to be the most effectual method of Introducing Popery into a Country, and have expended very Considerable sums of Money, for the purchase of Tolerations to Dissenters.

Before I reply to what is said, concerning *drawing over Protestant Dissenters from abroad*, by this *Bill of Indulgence*; I shall propose this Question, whether the Granting Liberty of Conscience, with the Sacramental Test, will not be as effectual to the Peopling of this Kingdom with English Conformists, as a general Toleration, without restrictive Clauses to the planting of it with *Scotch Dissenters*? But to return, I presume by what the Author says, concerning

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drawing over Protestant Dissenters from abroad; he cannot mean Foreigners, because he acknowledges them to be provided for, by an Act past the last Parliament in their Favour. He must therefore wholly, or more especially design the Dissenting Protestants of *Scotland*: Now in Reference to these, I leave it to the serious Consideration of every judicious, and impartial Reader, First, whether that Sect among 'em, whose violent Principles have unqualified 'em for Indulgence there, should be Tolerated here? Can we Reasonably expect, that those who are so Turbulent in their own Countrey, shou'd be quiet in ours? Or that by their being Transplanted into another Soil, and by a kind and *Indulgent* Cultivation of them, we may *gather Figs* off this sharpest sort of *Thistles*? Secondly, whether the Free and Publick exercise of Religion should be *Indulg'd* to others of them, who have publickly Declar'd our Church Government to be Antichristian, and have solemnly Sworn to Extirpate Prelacy? Thirdly, whether those that are the most moderate among 'em, can with Reason expect, but that *with the same measure they have Meted to their Brethren*, the Episcopal Clergy in their own Countrey, *it should be measur'd to them again*, when they come to settle in this Kingdom? So that if any *Indulgence* be granted, 'tis purely the Result of our own Charitable Inclinations, and a plain Evidence to the World, that our just Resentments of their Severity to others, has not Alienated our affections from them.

Neither will this *Indulgence* probably tend to the *Uniting* of Protestants at home, as is too fully prov'd by Experience in *England*; where the present Toleration has not had that good effect; neither can we in Reason expect it should be more Successful here; for if it equally extend to all Parties and Denominations of Protestant Dissenters, their mutual jealousies of one another, and their Respective endeavours to propagate their Opinions, and to promote their Temporal Interests, will naturally create great Heats and Animosities; but if the benefit of the *Indulgence* be unequally distributed, it will be so far from being a means of supporting, that it will considerably weaken the Government by disobliging all, but those that are particularly Encourag'd, and Caress'd by it.

But Secondly, as *this Indulgence is not Necessary for the common Protestant Interest in this Kingdom*; so neither is it so *highly reasonable*, as the Author pretends, as may appear, by a particular Consideration of the Arguments he makes use of to prove it. For first, as *the early Zeal of the Dissenters, in behalf of this Government, may Intitle 'em to its Protection*, so it can't be deny'd but that they have enjoy'd it ever since the Revolution, and have Receiv'd more than ordinary marks of Royal Favour, partly by the free Liberty that is granted 'em throughout the Kingdom, for the publick Exercise of their Religion, and for the Building of Meeting Houses, even in Corporate Towns; as also by his Majesties bounty, in allowing Yearly hitherto a considerable Sum for the maintenance of their Ministers.

Secondly, there seems to be more than ordinary Reason to make an Act in behalf of Foreign Protestants, because they are found by experience to have more favourable Thoughts of; and more forward Inclinations to our Church-Government and Worship, than others have. And besides, 'tis Observable, that the free Exercise of Religion, which was granted 'em by the late Act, was to continue but for seven Years, in which time it was suppos'd they might Learn our Language, and be Instructed in the Principles and Worship of the Establish't Church, and 'twas with good Reason hop't that after the Expiration of that Term, they would declare themselves Members of our Communion. And I'me credibly Inform'd, that of Eleven Congregations of Foreign Protestants in *London*, there are Nine Conformists.

Thirdly,

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Thirdly, The Papists are not in equal circumstances of publick Favour with our Dissenting Brethren; for as the Liberty they have in the Exercise of their Religion, was extorted from the Government, by the pressing necessity of publick Affairs, so it is not confirm'd to them by any Act of Parliament, as this Indulgence is expected, and I suppose, design'd to be to the Dissenters.

And Fourthly, the experience that our Dissenting Brethren have had of our Tenderness towards them heretofore, is a sufficient Argument and Security to 'em of our future Kindness; for we consider our mutual Agreement in the same Articles of Faith, and are glad this Author is pleas'd to declare, That the suppressing of Protestant Dissenters, by the strict execution of Penal Laws, is *a Practice that has a just Odium left upon it*; but are sorry, That *the just Odium left upon it* among us, should be wholly confin'd to us, and that this Practice should have no Censure, nor Reflection cast upon it among our Neighbours: And 'tis strange, that the Author should say, that there is so *apparent a contrariety init, to the mild and merciful Genius of our Holy Religion*, seeing he can't but know the time when it was an avow'd Doctrine, and a General Practice among the *Presbyterians* and *Independants*, to bar the Members of the Church of *England* from the Free Exercise of Divine Worship according to their Consciences: And 'tis as strange, that this Practice should be *so apparently contrary to our Holy Religion*, and have so *mischievous Effects upon the publick Peace* here in this Kingdom, and yet be thought so great an Evidence of a truly Christian Zeal, and so effectual an Instrument of publick Good in *Scotland*; and how possibly can our Author *hope, That all Protestants are in this Point come to a better Temper, than to gratifie their Enemies by Ruining their Brethren*, when there is so plain a Demonstration of the contrary; unless he be of Opinion, that what is accounted a Warm and Sanguine Temper of Religion there, is to be esteem'd the raging Heat of a *malignant* Feavor here.

Fourthly, as concerning the establishing Toleration by a Law; the Reason why some may be against it, is not (as our Author do's invidiously insinuate) that they wait for *a more favourable opportunity of Reviving the former Severities*, but that they may still have it in their Power to shew their Tenderness to their Dissenting Brethren, and may prevent, or repress the misdemeanors that some Nonconformists may possibly be Guilty of, if they had a Legal Toleration; as also, that they may secure the Established Religion they profess, against the Dangerous Consequences they fear from a General Indulgence.

And Lastly, as to what he says concerning His Majesties Declaration, I desire this Author to consider more seriously, whether there be not some others in the Three Kingdoms besides the Protestant Dissenters of *Ireland*, to whom *One great end of His Majesties Declaration is yet unaccomplish'd*) and whether there be *a Law made to cover* the Protestant Episcopal Clergy in *Scotland, from Persecution on the Account of Religion*.

By all which it may plainly be perceiv'd, That 'tis not by force of the Authors Arguments for the Necessity, or Reasonableness of Toleration, but purely in compliance to the importunate Desires of our Dissenting Brethren, that the Members of the Establish'd Church are inclin'd to grant 'em a General and Legal Indulgence, as Parents do often humour their Children, in giving 'em those things they eagerly desire, which tho' pleasant to their Pallates, are yet many times prejudicial to their Health,

And now, I proceed to the Second Desire of the Protestant Dissenters, which is, *That there may be no such Clauses annext to this Bill, as would disable 'em from serving their King and their Country*; which in plain terms is no more than this; That whereas the Ease to Tender Consciences was the only thing

they

they formerly desir'd; they now Claim it as their due, to be admitted also into all Honourable and Profitable Employments, and without these, whatever Ease may be given to their Consciences, 'tis to be fear'd they will have no quiet in their Minds.

But let us hear our Authors Auguments for granting this Bill of Indulgence, without a Sacramental Test annext. First he tells us, That *the Sacrament Test in* England *was chiefly design'd against Papists*, but 'tis also plain, it was intended against Protestant Dissenters too; for tho' none but the former be mention'd in the Title, yet the latter are included in the Body of the Act; and if the Zeal of the English Dissenters against Popery in the late times has not exempted them from a Sacramental Test; our Dissenting Brethren in this Kingdom, cannot with Modesty expect, that their late Services should Intitle them to any such Immunities.

Secondly, He tells us *such a Test for disabling Protestant Dissenters for any publick Service, is against the common Protestant Interest of* Ireland. *Our Circumstances indeed vastly differ*, as he says, *from those of* England, for here the Established Church is more in Danger than there, by the Protestant Dissenters, as well as by *the common Enemy*: In *England* one unmixt People does compose the main body of the Nation, which continues still the same; but here we are made up of several Nations, and there is a daily Accession of great Numbers from a Neighbouring Country, of whom the meaner sort, are generally of a different Communion from the Establish'd Church, Tho' the Nobility and Gentry, (to their great praise be it spoken) are generaly Conformists, 'Tis possible indeed, as he Observes That *the Irish may be more Numerous, if there should be a General Peace*, and I may add, That 'tis highly probable, that the Papists will grow much more Numerous, if there should be a *General Indulgence*; and therefore, notwithstanding our Authors Opinion, we cannot think it Reasonable *to give the Protestant Interest a wider Basis* here, than it has in *Holland* (which is a Place of greatest Liberty in Matters of Religion) where all Protestants are not equally capable of Employments without Religious Tests. As to what he says, concerning the Danger of a future Rebellion, we hope, that by the late Acts of Parliament made against the Papists, and the diligence of the Magistrates in putting them in Execution, the *Irish* may be disabled for any New Insurrections; or if we should fall into the same unhappy Circumstances that we have been lately in, we have Reason to believe, Notwithstanding the Authors disadvantagious Representation of the Temper of the Dissenters (wherein he intimates, that the excluding them from publick Offices, would incline 'em in future Dangers to desert the publick Service (the foreboding of which seems equivalent to an Advice to them, and a Menace to us) Notwithstanding this, I say, we have Reason to believe, that the Consideration of the common Safety, and their Gratitude for their Indulgence, which they now expect, would engage 'em to shew an *equal Zeal* to what they did before, tho' they should not be wholly on *equal Terms* with us, since they could not reasonably hope for so kind a Treatment from the Papists, as they have had from us,

Thirdly, To what the Author says, to prove, That *it does not seem agreeable to the Judgment of the Parliament of* England, *that any such Test should be impos'd here*; I answer, That as the Substituting *the New Oaths*, and the Declaration of *Test against Popery* instead of the Oath of Supremacy did not Repeal the Statute that enjoyns the Sacrament Test in *England*; so neither can it with the least shadow of Reason be alledged, That the English Act for the Abrogating the Oath of Supremacy in *Ireland*, &c. ought to be construed as intended, to prevent the imposing of it here, in case a General Indulgence should be Granted to the Protestant Dissenters in this Kingdom.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, To the first Argument produc'd by the Author, to prove *a Sacrament Teſt to be as unreaſonable as 'tis dangerous*; Viz. *That it will put the Proteſtant Diſſenters into worſe Circumſtances, than they are in at preſent*; I may with great Juſtice and Reaſon, Reply, that whatever *hardſhips* the Diſſenters may pretend, they ſhould be under by thoſe Reſtrictions; I am ſure the Members of the Eſtabliſh'd Church would be in far *worſe Circumſtances than they now are in*, if an Indulgence ſhould be Granted without thoſe *Clauſes*.

Firſt, 'Tis too Notorious to be denied, That the Conformiſts at *Sligo*, and *Crum*, at *Inniskillen* and *Derry*, did appear at leaſt as early, and Act as Zealouſly for this Government as the Diſſenters; and conſequently the Conformiſts will have Reaſon to think themſelves ſeverely dealt with, if no other way can be found of Rewarding the Services of the former, without the apparent hazarding the moſt valuable Rights of the latter, by Granting the Diſſenters ſuch an Indulgence, and by admitting them into ſuch Offices as may give 'em Power and Opportunity to alter the whole Frame of the preſent Church Government.

Secondly, As to what is ſaid concerning *the Sacraments not being a fit Teſt of Admiſſion into Offices*; I obſerve, Firſt, that the Arguments he makes uſe of in this matter, are much the ſame with thoſe that were urg'd in the late Reign, for the taking off the Penal Laws and Teſt. Secondly, I anſwer more diſtinctly, That by this Sacramental Teſt, we do not proſtitute that Holy Inſtitution *to mean* and *worldly Purpoſes*, as our Author inſinuates; but Religion being the great Band of Humane Society, 'tis highly Reaſonable, that thoſe Perſons ſhould be Rewarded, as well as Intruſted with Employments in the State that give the greateſt Evidences of their Piety to Almighty God; And if this Argument of our Authors be valid, 'twill not only conclude againſt this but all other *Religious Teſts*, and then the moſt Scandalous Neglects of Holy Duties, muſt not be accounted a ſufficient Bar to an *Admiſſion* into the moſt conſiderable *Offices*, for fear of *Proſtituting* the *Ordinances* of Divine Worſhip, and of *Driving* Unworthy Perſons to a participation of thoſe Sacred Myſteries; And if, as our Author ſays, the *Intereſt of Religion is very little concerned* in the *Poſture of Receiving the Holy Sacrament*; why ſhould any Perſon ſeperate from the Communion of the Eſtabliſh'd Church, on Account of that which our Author is pleas'd to call a *Trivial Matter*, and a *Trifle*: But if any Man refuſe to give the State ſo *Trivial* and inconſiderable a Mark of his Complyance to its *Orders* and *Injunctions*: There is no Reaſon why ſuch an one ſhould be intruſted with the Management of the *Civil and Military Offices*, or that they ſhould be eſteemed ſuch *Uſeful Perſons*, that it ſhould be thought the Intereſt of the *Government to comprehend 'em*.

The Caſe that our Author puts of *a Man endued with Eminent Wiſdom*, *Integrity*, &c. is ſcarcely to be be ſuppos'd; for no Man ſurely, that deſerves that Character, will unqualifie himſelf to ſerve his King, his Countrey, and his Temporal Intereſt too, by refuſing to Receive the Holy Sacrament in ſuch a Poſture, which our Author acknowledges, is *more expreſſive of our Reverence to our Saviour*, than that which is in Uſe among the Diſſenters.

However, as a Reward to thoſe that have been more than ordinarily Remarkable for their Services to His Majeſty, and are now in any Civil, or Military Employment, it may perhaps be thought convenient, that Perſons ſo Qualified, may be excepted as Nominees, and hold their Offices, notwithſtanding their Refuſal of the Sacramental Teſt.

Lastly, whereas our Author says, that the *Establish't Church will be no way indanger'd by the Indulgence* he is pleading for, I answer that tho' the Honours and Revenues of the Clergy are now secur'd to 'em, yet we cannot foresee the Difficulties the Conforming Clergy may possibly contest with, in asserting the Rites of the Church, if Nonconformists were Qualified for Civil Offices; and besides, we are far less concern'd for the security of our Temporal Interest, than for the Establishment of our Antient, Holy and Peaceable Religion.

I am far from detracting from the good Services which the Dissenters did the King and the Nation, in being joynt Instruments with the Conformists in the Preservation of *Derry* and *Innishillin*; nor would I exclude 'em from *a Capacity of concurring to preserve their Country again.* But as in the late Troubles common Safety, and the publick Interest of the Nation did oblige 'em to take up Arms, so if a like juncture should happen, (which God forbid) they may be in the same Circumstances to serve their King and Country as before, tho' they be not Legally qualified for Offices, by a General and Unlimited Indulgence.

As to the Authors Commendations of the Peaceable Temper of the Dissenters of this Kingdom, it is to be Observed, That they have not had the same opportunities of discovering their *unpeaceable Turbulency towards their Neighbours*, as their Brethren in *Scotland* at present have, or of *expressing their Dissatisfaction to the Government*, as both they and the Dissenters in *England* have formerly had; but if ever they should be in the like Circumstances here, we have no great Reason to expect much more favourable Usage, nor the Government a more Dutiful Obedience from them.

Good Nature and common Prudence will indeed direct us to provide for our own *Security*, by condescending to all the Reasonable Requests of our Dissenting *Friends*; but no Motives ought to prevail on us, to make such Large Concessions to them, as will in all probability shake the very Foundations of the Establish'd Church.

DUBLIN.

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